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**To: ConnectME Authority**  
**Phil Lindley, Executive Director ConnectME**

**RE: Pre-Application Letter – 7<sup>th</sup> Round Grant**

**Project: West Ridge Rd RT, Mars Hill, ME**

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In response to the Authority's announcement of its Seventh Grant Round, Pioneer Wireless, Inc., dba Pioneer Broadband, ("PBB") is pleased to submit this Pre-Application letter for our "West Ridge Rd RT" DSL project.

1. We are proposing to install a DSL Access Multiplexer (DSLAM) adjacent to the Remote Terminal (RT) located about 3.8 miles east of the town of Westfield, ME across the Mars Hill town line. This terminal serves a portion of the Mars Hill area that includes approximately 40 households. The exact service area will be the geographical area covered by the LEC's wire facilities at the RT. Pioneer is in the process of acquiring the exact route of the physical cable plant from the LEC.
2. Our knowledge of this area is extensive. We have communicated with other service providers (FairPoint and TimeWarner) in the region and there is no evidence that they have plans to expand into this locale.
3. We intend to utilize a fiber optic backhaul link via the Three Ring Binder project to serve a remotely located DSLAM adjacent to the RT. The standard offer for broadband speed will be 10M/1M (Tier 5) delivered to each customer using ADSL2+ protocol. It is estimated the installation of the backhaul links and DSLAM can be completed within 18 months of funding depending on weather conditions when funding is made available. Customer installations can begin immediately once the DSLAM is operational.
4. Current estimated project cost is \$60,350. This amount is subject to change as project details are worked out and will be finalized within the formal application for this project. PBB is requesting funding for \$54,315 representing 90% of the estimated project cost.
5. PBB will fund \$6035, or 10% of the estimated project cost. Appropriate documentation and evidence of funding availability will be provided in the formal application in a form acceptable to the Authority.

6. There are an estimated 40 customers served within an 18,000' radius of the project site. PBB will obtain the exact number of possible customers from the LEC when we submit the full application. There are few businesses. We calculate that the DSLAM can serve all 40 customers, thus providing 100% coverage within the available wire center.

7. We are working with the area businesses and local groups in gathering support of this project. Evidence of partnerships and statements of support are being acquired and will be included within the formal application.

8. PBB serves in 55 Maine towns from 80 locations, broadcasting over 5000 square miles, and serving over 5000 customers via fiberoptic cable, wireless, cable, DSL, dialup. PBB has a proven track record of successful expansion activities and deep commitment to serving rural Maine. Pioneer has been the recipient of past grant funding from the ConnectME Authority as well.

We look forward to formal application availability and working with the Authority to bridge the digital divide for the residents and businesses of this area.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Flewelling

